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INDIANA LAUNCHES FREE TOBACCO QUITLINE TO HELP SMOKERS QUIT



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Indianapolis – Smokefree Indiana announces a partnership with Free & Clear, Inc. to launch a statewide telephone-based tobacco treatment program, the Indiana Tobacco Quitline. The Indiana Tobacco Quitline is made possible through a supplemental grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, allocated to build a state tobacco quitline. Beginning today, Hoosiers have access to Free & Clear's comprehensive tobacco treatment services by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW. Free & Clear was chosen to run the quitline based on its comprehensive service offerings, evidence-based approach and proven efficacy. Services are available in both English and Spanish; translation is available for other languages.

With an adult smoking rate of 24.9 percent, Indiana ranks 7th among all states in adult smoking prevalence. Although that rate has declined since 2002 when it was 27.7 percent, it is still higher than the national average rate of 22 percent. The human and economic costs of tobacco addiction affect all Hoosiers. Annual healthcare expenditures directly associated with smoking cost \$1.9 billion in 2004; Medicaid expenditures related to tobacco cost \$448 million for the same period. Lung cancer, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases and many others related to tobacco use kill 9,700 Indiana residents annually.

Smoking among pregnant women is also higher than the national average at 18.5 percent, but 64 of Indiana's 92 counties have a higher smoking rate among pregnant women than the state's average. Smoking during pregnancy is associated with poor health outcomes such as low birth weight and a 30 to 50 percent higher risk for miscarriage.

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The program is designed to prioritize services for those most in need of cessation help. For the next three months, the Indiana Tobacco Quitline will serve all Hoosiers who wish to quit tobacco; however, services are limited due to funding. Beginning July 1, services will be targeted to pregnant smokers and other priority populations. The comprehensive program includes a personalized quit plan and proactive telephone-based treatment with a highly trained Quit Coach. The new help line is accessible 8 am- midnight EST seven days a week. Participants will also receive a Quit Kit of materials that will help them stay on track with their personalized quit plan.

“Free & Clear is honored to have the opportunity to partner with Smokefree Indiana,” said Mary Kate Salley, Vice President of Client Services, Free & Clear, Inc. “The tobacco problem is well known and Free & Clear looks forward to being part of the solution. Telephone counseling has been clinically proven to assist tobacco users set a plan and quit. We are pleased to help Hoosiers realize their goals of living a healthy life without tobacco.”

Free & Clear, Inc. is a highly specialized tobacco treatment provider for health plans, employers and government organizations. Free & Clear helps its customers improve the health and risk status of their populations and control related costs by reducing the prevalence of tobacco use. More than 50 million people have access to the Free & Clear Tobacco Treatment Program, which is the only commercial tobacco treatment program in the United States that is clinically proven through published studies in multiple peer-reviewed, scientific journals over the course of nearly 20 years. Free & Clear is based in Seattle, Washington. More information about Free & Clear can be found at www.freeclear.com.

The mission of Smokefree Indiana is to improve the quality of life in Indiana by promoting tobacco-free, healthy lifestyles through community action and advocacy to prevent tobacco use, provide assistance to tobacco users who want to quit and protecting nonsmokers from secondhand smoke. Smokefree Indiana is sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Indiana State Department of Health, and Ball State University.